



Mental Health Update March 23, 2007

Health Operations Center (HOC)

Last week, the Department of Health's Health Operations Center was activated in response to rising temperatures and river water levels and the potential for ice jams and flooding of sections of the Winooski River in the City of Montpelier. The threat potential laid the groundwork for an emergency exercise that called for planning a full evacuation of patients of the Vermont State Hospital. Although the hospital has had contingency plans for short-term relocation of patients, the flood scenario required longer term plans to be made in order to accommodate likely effects of flood damage and associated health hazards and contaminants. The Division of Mental Health and VSH provided technical assistance to the Health Operations Center in planning the evacuation needs of patients and staff that included transportation, relocation, continuity of care, and health information retrieval and storage plans. The four-day exercise concluded with an initial planning framework for likely community partners, key Memorandums of Understanding, and organizational resources that would be needed in order to provide a timely response to a longer term patient relocation scenario. The exercise also provided an opportunity for VDH Emergency Preparedness staff and mental health staff to work closely together on a shared work product that will promote patient care and continuity in an emergency situation.

FUTURES PROJECT

Second Spring Prepares for Opening

Director Roy Riddle reported this week that he has hired half the program staff, including an assistant director, three nurses, ten recovery staff, a social worker, a vocational counselor, two cooks, one housekeeper and a human resources person. Renovations are essentially complete and much work has been done to get the kitchen up and running. An initial round of staff training is complete with more to come after all positions are filled. Many staff are residents of Williamstown, an asset that will help to create connections between the residents of Second Spring and the community. Licensure requirements will be completed by next week.

All are invited to an Open House on Saturday, March 31, 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. Guests will have a chance to tour the facility, enjoy refreshments, and celebrate the opening of the first new community residential program of the Futures Plan.

Corrections Inpatient Work Group

The 12th work group of the Futures planning process convened this week, its focus is the issue of psychiatric inpatient capacity needed by the Department of Corrections. At the work group's organizational meeting, members reviewed the proposed charge and began to identify how the mental health and corrections systems currently work to identify, screen, assess, and treat individuals who may require inpatient psychiatric services at the Vermont State Hospital. The composition of the group includes mental health and corrections administrators as well as family and consumer representatives. The group plans to meet monthly.

VERMONT STATE HOSPITAL

VSH Advance Directives Policy

The VSH Policy Committee will be considering amendments to the VSH Advance Directives Policy at their April 9th meeting. Please check the VSH webpage for a working draft of the policy ([link to VSH Advance Directives Policy on VSH website](#)) and for a Policy Comment form. ([link to VSH Policy Comment form on VSH website](#))

VERMONT STATE HOSPITAL CENSUS

The Vermont State Hospital Census was 47 as of midnight Wednesday night. The average census for the past 45 days was 48.